

COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL PERFORMANCE  
455 Golden Gate Avenue, Suite 14400  
San Francisco, CA 94102

---

Contact: Victoria B. Henley  
Director-Chief Counsel  
(415) 557-1200

---

FOR RELEASE  
April 15, 2009

JUDICIAL PERFORMANCE COMMISSION ISSUES  
DECISION AND ORDER IMPOSING PUBLIC CENSURE  
OF JUDGE CHRISTOPHER J. SHELDON  
PURSUANT TO STIPULATION

The Commission on Judicial Performance has issued a Decision and Order of Public Censure of Judge Christopher J. Sheldon of the Riverside County Superior Court pursuant to stipulation (Commission Rule 127). Following the filing of a Notice of Formal Proceedings, Judge Sheldon, through his counsel, and the examiner for the commission proposed a Stipulation for Discipline by Consent (Stipulation) pursuant to Commission Rule 127(b). The Decision and Order Imposing Public Censure is issued pursuant to that Stipulation which was approved by the commission.

From early 2007 through late 2008, Judge Sheldon routinely left the courthouse after the completion of his dependency calendar which regularly ended before noon, without receiving authorization for his half-day absences and without notifying his supervising judges. The commission concluded that the judge's conduct violated the Code of Judicial Ethics and constituted prejudicial misconduct. In its decision, the commission stated, "By regularly absenting himself from the courtroom before noon without the approval of his supervising judges for a period of almost two years, Judge Sheldon has demonstrated a flagrant disregard for his obligations to his fellow judges, the public, and the reputation of the judiciary."

Pursuant to the Stipulation, Judge Sheldon has agreed to tender his irrevocable resignation and not to at any time seek or hold judicial office in California or to seek or accept judicial assignment, appointment, or reference for work from any California state court.

In 1998, Judge Sheldon received a public admonishment for his conduct in handling his misdemeanor calendar over a period of approximately seven months. Judge Sheldon failed to take the bench or left the bench during portions of the calendar; allowed his clerks to enter pleas, execute documents imposing sentences in his absence, and stamp his signature on waiver forms; and on occasion, left the courthouse or would jog on a courthouse staircase during his pretrial calendar.

The decision and order is available on the commission's Web site at [www.cjp.ca.gov](http://www.cjp.ca.gov) (under "Press Releases" and "Public Discipline – 1960 to Present") and at the commission's office.

\* \* \*

The commission is composed of three judges, two lawyers, and six public members. The Chairperson is the Hon. Judith D. McConnell of the Court of Appeal, Fourth Appellate District, in San Diego, California.

For further information about the Commission on Judicial Performance, see the commission's Web site.